ROBERT THURSTON

Composer/Arranger/Conductor

Robert Thurston (b. 1959) has been writing music professionally for over 35 years. He served for 20 years on the arranging staff of The United States Air Force Band in Washington DC, and was the Band’s chief arranger-composer from 2007 until his retirement in 2014. In that capacity he wrote for the Air Force Concert Band and Orchestra, the Singing Sergeants chorus, the Airmen of Note big band, the Strolling Strings, the Ceremonial Brass, and numerous chamber groups.

Thurston has written for college, high-school and middle-school bands throughout the United States, and has numerous commissions and published works to his credit. His arrangement of “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” a duet between cellist Yo Yo Ma and ukulele master Jake Shimabukuro, is featured on Yo Yo Ma’s 2008 CD “Songs of Joy and Peace.” As an arranger for the Air Force Band, Thurston wrote for a variety of guest artists, including Spyro Gyra, Kool & the Gang, Restless Heart, Lonestar, Wynonna, Rita Coolidge, the Ventures, Ben Vereen, Chaka Khan, The Miracles and Melinda Doolittle.

Before his military service, Thurston taught instrumental music for five years in Orlando, Florida, and Columbus, Ohio. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music education from Florida State University, where he studied arranging and composition with Charles Carter

and William Peterson. He is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and

Publishers (ASCAP).